

Alabama Fatherhood Initiative (AFI) Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2004



College Football Coach Restoring Relationships Between Fathers and their Children

After years of coaching players with deep seeded pain and anger due to a lack of relationship with their fathers, Tony Pierce, the defensive coordinator at Alabama State University decided to do something about it. Using his experiences from coaching at universities such as Pittsburgh, West Virginia, Wake Forest and Georgia, he started Coach Tony Pierce Outreach, Inc. and the Fathers In Touch Program.

Tony contacts fathers who have not been proactive in their children's lives and pairs them up with a teammate (a father who is proactive) to help give them tools for learning how to love and train their children. Head Football Coach, Charles Coe, has endorsed what Tony is doing and has implemented the program at ASU. Several NFL and College coaches including Bobby Bowden of Florida State have endorsed Fathers In Touch. Call Tony at 334-467-8246 for more information.

Read Recent Father Facts!

National Fatherhood Initiative

In a longitudinal study of 2,500 children of divorce, twenty years after the divorce less than one-third of boys and one-quarter of girls reported having close relationships with their fathers. In contrast, seventy percent of youths from the comparison group of intact families reported feeling close to their fathers. *Source: Hetherington, E. Mavis, and John Kelly. For Better or For Worse: Divorce Reconsidered. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002:231.*

Jon Costa and AFI of Etowah County Recognized at the 1st Africa American Forum

Jon Costa, Alabama Fatherhood Initiative Coordinator and Asst. Director with Etowah Co. DHR, participated in the first African American Forum sponsored by HHS-Office of Child Support Enforcement, which was held in Washington, D.C. on August 23-24. Federal officials from Atlanta recently visited the Etowah Co. AFI Family Project in Gadsden, and as a result of observing the collaborative success of our state's pilot program, they extended this invitation for Alabama's representation at the Forum. There were more than 50 participants from around the country in this two-day Forum, which included presentations by OCSE Commissioner Dr. Sherri Z. Heller and ACF Asst. Secretary Dr. Wade Horn.

The Forum was designed by the federal government to obtain impressions about child support enforcement nationwide in order to improve services for the African American community, to highlight new developments in a wide range of ACF programs, and to foster a dialogue between federal, state, and

community leaders. Through panel and group conversations, Jon told the AFI story including ideas for community collaboration in the child support program. It is anticipated that additional federal recognition of the AFI Project will be forthcoming.

Children's Trust Fund of Alabama (CTF) Announces FY 2004-2005 Fatherhood Programs

In 2000, the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Human Resources entered into a partnership to address the needs of fathers, particularly non-custodial fathers, in the State of Alabama. The programs include pregnancy prevention, character development and life skills classes with adolescent males; parenting classes with non-custodial males (including one prison based program); home visitation with non-custodial males; mediation with non/never married parents regarding visitation and custody issues; and community education sessions on the rights and responsibilities of fatherhood. Faith-based organizations have played a significant role in this initiative. Grants are awarded to communities through CTF's yearly competitive grant process. See CTF Web site www.ctf.state.al.us/ for 2004-2005 Fatherhood Program grantees

43 percent of first marriages dissolve within fifteen years; about 60 percent of divorcing couples have children; and approximately one million children each year experience the divorce of their parents. (National Fatherhood Initiative)

Morgan County AFI on Cable Television 4CTV

The Alabama Fatherhood Initiative (AFI) of Morgan County is getting the word out to non-custodial parents about skills training opportunities. Morgan AFI Case Manager, Angela Henderson, appeared earlier this year as a guest on the "Calhoun Review", a 30-minute public affairs program produced by and televised on Calhoun Community College's cable television station, **4CTV**. Show host and Calhoun's Director of Public Relations, Janet Kincherlow-Martin, talked with Mrs. Henderson about the mission and objectives of the AFI and about the support the pilot project is receiving from local judges and the community. The program included a moving testimonial from one of the fathers who recently completed short-term skills training at Calhoun CC.

AFI participants may enroll in the 15-week CEFA construction trades program at the college. CEFA is a short-term, intensive training program, where classes meet Monday-Friday from 8am - 5pm each day. The Decatur CareerLink certifies participants for CEFA welding and electrical programs. *The "Calhoun Review AFI Program" video may be purchased as a motivational and training tool. To obtain a copy, contact Calhoun Community College Public Relations Office at 256/306-2561.*

Upcoming Event! The 2nd Annual Alabama Fatherhood Conference

June 8-10, 2005 Sheraton, Birmingham Civic Center - Go to www.nihdus.org/programs.htm for Conference updates